

Mr. Davis was also a leading activist in the Civil Rights era of the 1960's. He stood side by side with Martin Luther King Jr. in the movement for freedom, equality and unity within our Nation for all. As close friends of the Reverend Dr. King, Ossie and Ruby Dee served as Masters of ceremonies for the historic 1963 March on Washington. As a strong advocate of the African American identity, Mr. Davis stood by the stimulating words, moving persona, and in his words, "The manifestation of Black manhood" that was Malcolm X. He full heartedly felt Malcolm's message of determination, self Love, and Knowledge of self.

When Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King passed away Mr. Davis eulogized them both at their funerals. Many believed Mr. Davis would lose his career as an actor for delivering an eulogy for Brother Malcolm X, an enormously controversial figure in American History. The courage of Mr. Davis to brave the fire for his allegiance to Brother Malcolm X displays his sensitivity to issues affecting the hearts and minds of the African Americans, and the strong foundation of his heritage that was rooted in his soul.

His efforts as a Civil Rights leader, activist and vanguard as an actor in Black Hollywood

are a testament to his views on equality and freedom. Mr. Davis was also a firm believer of self love and righteousness within the Black community. His choice of acting roles and his written works reflect these ideas in a clear and unmistakable manner. Mr. Davis used his charisma and sheer talent on and off camera to explore and unfold the complex issues which affect our society and are most often swept under the rug. As a socially conscious actor, he could not sit back while such complex issuers go unnoticed, making himself a part of such classical projects as *Do the Right Thing*, *Jungle Fever*, *Malcolm X* and most recently *She Hate Me*, all projects of writer, actor, director Spike Lee.

Before his untimely death, Ossie Davis began to give back to the community in a number of different fashions. He did not simply throw money at a problem, but took a more nurturing hand on approach to his philanthropy efforts. In 2004 Mr. Davis returned home to his Alma Mater, The Mecca-Howard University where he became a visiting professor in the John H. Johnson School of Communications. Additionally, he served as the orator for How-

ard's 2004 Charter Day where he also received a special citation of achievement.

In his community service Mr. Davis was also an advocate for issues affecting young Black males. In 2004 Mr. Davis and his wife Ruby Dee were the luncheon speakers and kicked off the State of the African American Male (SAAM) Conference which I hosted. Mr. Davis stated that it was his personal mission to reverse the trends affecting our young black males, such as drug addiction, high drop out rates and criminal issues.

Ossie Davis will forever live in our hearts and minds through his countless efforts to the community, his effortless talents on and off camera, and as a loving father and husband. He will also be recognized on the world stage as a pioneer of the Civil Rights movement, fighting for justice, equality and what he knew was right during a time of social uncertainty. Ossie Davis knew as a person not afraid to think outside the box that the issues facing this country were bigger than you or I and no one person could lead this country to the promised land. He felt a collective effort of change was needed and is quoted as saying. "It's not the man, it's the plan."